

802. f. 17  
H O M E R's H Y M N

T O

C E R E S,

TRANSLATED INTO

E N G L I S H V E R S E,

B Y

R I C H A R D H O L E, LL.B.

---

— chartis nec furta nocent, et secula profunt;

Solaque non norunt hæc monumenta mori.

MARTIAL.

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HOMER'S

TO

CERES

TRANSLATED INTO

ENGLISH

BY

RICHARD HOLMES

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And sold by ...

P R E F A C E.

**T**HIS translation of the HYMN TO CERES was undertaken at the particular request of the gentleman, who favour'd the world with a CRITICISM on that most valuable fragment of antiquity, in the Appendix to the 63d Vol. of the MONTHLY REVIEW; and to whose assistance the Author acknowledges himself to have been greatly indebted.

The following extract from that Criticism will, I apprehend, be sufficient to give the Reader some general idea of the Poem itself; and at the same time it will afford entertainment to the curious to be informed of the extraordinary and unexpected circumstances which contributed to its publication.

The Author of the Criticism introduces his remarks with observing that, “the discovery of this ancient and truly beautiful Greek Poem was no less singular than interesting; and that the admirers of classic literature will think themselves under great obligations to the learned and ingenious Editor\* for the pains he hath taken to gratify their curiosity, not only by an elegant edition of the Poem itself, but by his very valuable notes and observations, which tend to illustrate its beauties, and to throw a light on some of its obscurities.

“RUHNKENIUS informs us that nothing was more distant from his expectations than the discovery of this HYMN TO CERES. He knew, indeed, that a Poem, bearing that title, and ascribed

\* David Ruhnkenius an eminent Professor at the University of Leyden.

ascribed to Homer, existed in the second Century : but as it had long been considered as irretrievably lost, he had formed no hopes of ever seeing it rescued from the obscurity to which it had been consigned :---at least he could not have flattered himself, that on a discovery of so unexpected a treasure, the charge of presenting it to the Public, would have been entrusted to him.

—“ For the satisfaction of our Readers, it is necessary to mention the most interesting particulars that relate to this singular and valuable discovery.

“ Some years since a German, CHRISTIAN FREDERIC MATTHÆI, who had been educated by the learned ERNESTI, and credited the discipline of that celebrated master, by his skill  
and

and erudition, was invited to settle at Moscow, and to assist in a plan of literature, for which his abilities and acquirements most eminently qualified him. On his arrival at that city, he was informed, equally to his astonishment and satisfaction, that a very copious treasure of Greek MSS. was deposited in the Library of the HOLY SYNOD, which no person in that country had either the abilities to make use of, or the curiosity to examine. Struck with the relation of a circumstance so unexpected, and at the same time so peculiarly flattering to the taste of this learned man, he immediately seized the opportunity that was luckily offered him, to explore this repository of hidden treasure. After having examined several curious books, he discovered a manuscript copy of the works of Homer, written about the conclusion of the 14th century, but evidently a transcript from a  
very

very ancient and most valuable copy, which besides the ILLAD and the ODYSSEY, contained also sixteen of the Hymns, which had been long published under the name of Homer.---But this was not all. Twelve lines of a lost Hymn to Bacchus, and the Hymn to Ceres were preserved in this curious and long unnoticed manuscript. Exulting, as indeed he well might, in an acquisition so unexpected, and at the same time so valuable, he, with singular disinterestedness, communicated it to our Editor, that he might present it to the world without those delays, which would, in all probability, have retarded the publication of it at Moscow.

MATTHÆI, indeed, was well acquainted with the talents and extraordinary erudition of RUHNKENIUS; and as he knew too that his learned friend had been particularly engaged in the

the study of the Hymns of Homer, in order to give the Public a complete edition of them, he could not have entrusted this poem to the charge of a person more qualified to do justice to its publication than our Editor.—With this Hymn many VARIOUS READINGS, tending to illustrate and explain some obscure passages in those already published, were also communicated to RUHNKENIUS.

“The Editor observes, that as there was only ONE copy of this Hymn to Ceres, to which he could have recourse, he was frequently obliged to call in the aid of conjecture, in order to determine the reading, or guess at the sense, of some obscure passages.—And when an Editor makes so good a use of his \*INGENUITY as Ruhnkenius, the most scrupulous and fastidious critic will scarcely be disposed to find fault with him;

“ The

\* “ Ad ingenium, codicis vicarium confagi.” RUHN.

“The Editor declines the hazardous task of translation. We are sorry, that his scruples on this head should have deprived us of a pleasure, which we are sure he could have given us by a Latin version of this Hymn. It is certain, that translations have been (as our Editor says) the source of contentions; and we may add, that they have frequently been made the refuge of indolence. Nevertheless, they have their peculiar uses; and we hope ere long to see a translation of this poem executed with correctness and taste by some learned and ingenious hand. Such a translation would insure its own success; and would be as acceptable to the learned, as to those who are incapable of reading the Poem with ease and fluency in the original.

“Having given a general account of the discovery of this Hymn to Ceres, the Editor

B

examines

examines with what propriety it may lay claim to the Muse of Homer for its birth.

\* “Pausanias hath asserted more than once, and that not accidentally, but by design, that Homer had written such a hymn: and the old Scholiast on the Alexipharmics of Nicander speaks of hymns that were attributed to Homer, in which a circumstance relating to Ceres is mentioned. † But this hymn records no such circumstance; and therefore the Editor conjectures

\* “*Homerum Hymni auctorem edit testis idoneus, Pausanias, nec semel, et quasi prætersundo, sed quatuor locis, & constanter, Attic. 38. bis, Messen. 30. Corinth. 14.*”—See Ruhnkenius’s Preface, page 6. N. B. The lines quoted by Pausanias from this hymn have but a slight verbal variation, (together with the transposition of a line,) easy enough to be accounted for from the inadvertence of some Copyist: unless he himself made the mistake by having quoted from memory.

† The old Scholiast, in the passage referred to above, says, “That the Goddess laughed at the ludicrous speeches of Iambe— as is related in the HYMNS ASCRIBED to Homer.” Now since Ruhnke-

nus

tures that the critic through forgetfulness or inadvertence mistook Homer for Orpheus: or else he must have seen another Hymn ascribed to Homer different from the present.

“As to Pausanias, our Editor hints, that his judgment with respect to the subject of Homer’s Hymns is not to be implicitly followed. He allows this writer great merit, as a critic; but

B 2

thinks,

nus can discover no trace of such a circumstance in THIS HYMN, he suspects that the old Critic through forgetfulness, had confounded it with one of the hymns of Orpheus; or else that he had read some other hymn besides the present, which bore the name of Homer, and recorded this incident of Ceres and Iambe.

And yet it is by no means certain but that THIS may be the very hymn referred to by the Scholiast on Nicander; for it is worthy of observation, that immediately after Iambe is introduced by the Poet, as accommodating the Goddess with a seat, there is undoubtedly an omission of some lines, which are necessary to connect one passage with another. In its present state, it is abrupt and disjointed; from whence this question naturally arises: — May it not be presumed, that the incident above-mentioned, occurred in the lines which are lost in the present copy?

thinks, that the splendor of the subject too much dazzled his understanding to permit him to decide with impartiality.

“ He ingenuously acknowledgeth, that he hath some doubts, with respect to the high and illustrious origin ascribed to this hymn: But as no positive external evidence can be produced to determine the point, he chuses to rest his argument on, what appears to him, the more certain ground of internal proof; and observes, that though it be exquisitely beautiful, yet that it is evidently deficient in some of Homer’s more striking and predominant characteristics. It wants his energy and spirit:—that vigour, that inspiration, which animates and gives an irresistible power, as well as an enchanting beauty, to the poems of that sublime and inimitable Bard.

“ But

“But though this poem be dispossessed of the claim ascribed to it in the old Manuscript of Moscow, viz. as the production of Homer, yet the Editor hesitates not to give it the honor of very high antiquity. He is of opinion, that it was written immediately after Homer; or at least in the age of Hesiod. The *Χρὺς ἀρχαϊότητις*—the venerable wrinkles of hoary age are deeply marked on the very face of it. This will be visible to all that are skilled in the Greek classics. Such will perceive, and as it were *FEEL*, its antiquity, by a sensation that cannot be communicated or explained to the reader who hath not been particularly conversant in those studies.

“The Editor congratulates the age on the discovery of this curious poem,---rescued by mere accident from the darkest retreats of oblivion;

oblivion; and perhaps, but at a slight distance from inevitable perdition.--He deems it to be an acquisition, not only calculated to gratify the curiosity of the Connoisseurs in classic antiquity, or to entertain those lovers of Greek poetry whose studies are made subservient to a refined and elegant species of amusement; but he also esteems it, as of particular use to the critic, as it tends to illustrate some obscure passages both in the Greek and Latin poets.

“He closes his preface with observing, that content with the honor of publishing this Hymn, he leaves the farther comparison of it with the other poets of antiquity, for the sake of mutual illustration, to the skill and industry of other critics.”

To

To the preceding remarks it may not be improper to add, that the account, which APOLLONORUS hath given of CERES agrees with such peculiar exactness (a few incidents excepted) with the essential and leading circumstances of this Hymn, that I imagine the curious reader would be pleased to see it entire; and at the same time it may be considered as a general argument to the Hymn itself.

† “ Pluto, being inflamed with a violent love  
 “ for Proserpine, carries her off secretly by the  
 “ assistance of Jupiter.--Ceres traverses the earth  
 “ day and night with lighted torches in quest  
 “ of her: Having learnt from some skilled in  
 “ Divination, that she was convey’d away by  
 “ Pluto---enraged at the gods, she forsakes  
 “ heaven,

† The lines marked with inverted commas perfectly agree with the story of the Poem.

“ heaven, and assumes the form of a woman.”  
She goes to Eleufina, and fits down at first on  
a stone called AGELASTON, from the grief she  
then suffered, not far from the fountain Calli-  
chorus;—from thence she proceeds to the house  
of Celeus, at that time king of Eleufis, and is  
introduced to the females of his family, by  
whom being requested to fit down, an old  
woman called Iambe, excites mirth by reviling  
the goddess. On which account it is said, a  
license of speech is allowed to women when  
performing the mystical rites of Ceres.

“ Celeus at that time had a son by Metanira,  
“ whom Ceres undertook to nurse, and being  
“ willing to make him immortal she placed the  
“ child by night in the midst of the fire, by that  
“ means to take from him the corruptible part  
“ of his nature.

“ The

“ The child who was called Demophon,  
 “ grew and flourished daily beyond belief. — Me-  
 “ tanira watched the actions of the goddess, and  
 “ cried aloud when she saw him covered with  
 “ fire. — On this, the child was instantly taken  
 “ out, and Ceres revealed herself.” She then  
 prepared a chariot for Triptolemus, Metanira’s  
 eldest son, drawn by winged dragons, that he  
 should travel in it over the world, and instruct  
 mankind in sowing wheat, which she gave him  
 for that purpose.

“ In the mean time Jupiter commanded  
 “ Pluto to restore Proserpine : But he, fearing  
 “ she would stay a long time with her mother,  
 “ || gave her the seed of the Pomegranate to eat ;  
 “ which she did in obedience to his commands,  
 “ not foreseeing the consequence.”---- Ceres  
 placed

|| Ποιὰς ἔδωκε Πλούτων κοκκόν, are literally the words made use of by  
 the Poet in this hymn.

placed a heavy stone over Ascalaphus the son of Acheron and Gorgyra in the infernal regions for bearing false testimony against her. "At last  
 "Proserpine was compelled to stay with Pluto  
 "one  $\frac{1}{3}$  third of the year, and the other part  
 "she spent with the gods."---This is what they relate of Ceres. Ap. L. 1. C. 5.

I shall not enter into a particular discussion of the nature or merits of the Hymn to Ceres--- In the following attempt to translate it, I equally wished to avoid the extremes of a servile version, and a diffuse imitation. How far I have succeeded in adhering to the sense of the Poet, without abridging the privilege of a free translator, must be left to the determination of the candid Reader.

§ Ovid indeed represents the matter otherwise.

Nunc dea regnorum numen commune duorum,  
 Cum matre est TOTIDEM, totidem cum Coniuge menses,  
 Metam. Lib. v.

—But the account of Apollodorus agrees, in this respect, with the Hymn; and the general similarity is so striking, that one would imagine he had copied from it.

# HOMER'S HYMN

TO

## CERES.

CERES, to thee belongs the votive lay,  
Whose locks in radiance round thy temples play,  
And Proserpine, whom, distant from thy sight,  
Fierce Pluto bore to realms of endless night.  
For thus decreed the God, whose piercing eyes  
Trace every act, whose thunder shakes the skies,  
That she, whose hands the golden sickle bear,  
And choicest product of the circling year,

Rich fruits, and fragrant-breathing flowers, should  
know

The tender conflicts of maternal woe. 10

In Nyfia's vale, with nymphs a lovely train,  
Sprung from the hoary father of the main,  
Fair Proserpine consum'd the fleeting hours  
In pleasing sports, and pluck'd the gaudy flowers.

Around them wide the flamy crocus glows,  
Thro' leaves of verdure blooms the opening rose;  
The hyacinth declines his fragrant head,  
And purple violets deck th' enamell'd mead.

The fair NARCISSUS far above the rest,  
By magic form'd, in beauty rose confest. 20  
So Jove, t' ensnare the virgin's thoughtless mind,  
And please the ruler of the shades design'd.

He

He caus'd it from the opening earth to rise,  
 Sweet to the scent, alluring to the eyes.  
 Never did mortal, or celestial power  
 Behold such vivid tints adorn a flower.  
 From the deep root an hundred branches sprung,  
 And to the winds ambrosial odors flung;  
 Which lightly wafted on the wings of air,  
 The gladden'd earth, and heaven's wide circuit share.  
 The joy-dispensing fragrance spreads around,  
 And ocean's briny swell with smiles is crown'd.

O Pleas'd at the sight, nor deeming danger nigh,  
 The fair beheld it with desiring eye :  
 Her eager hand she stretch'd to seize the flower,  
 (Beauteous illusion of th' ethereal power !)  
 When, dreadful to behold, the rocking ground  
 Disparted—widely yawn'd a gulf profound !—  
 Forth-rushing from the black Abyss, arose  
 The gloomy monarch of the realm of woes,

40

Pluto, from Saturn sprung---The trembling maid  
 He seiz'd, and to his golden car convey'd.  
 Borne by immortal steeds the chariot flies :  
 And thus she pours her supplicating cries---

Affist, protect me, thou who reign'st above  
 Supreme and best of Gods, paternal Jove !  
 But ah ! in vain the hapless virgin rears  
 Her wild complaint---nor god nor mortal hears !---  
 Not to the white-arm'd nymphs with beautycrown'd,  
 Her lov'd companions, reach'd the mournful  
 found.

Pale Hecate, who in the cell of night  
 Muses on youthful pleasure's rapid flight,  
 And bright Hyperion's son, who decks the skies  
 With splendor, only heard the virgin's cries  
 Invoke the father of th' ethereal powers---  
 But he, at distance from their airy bowers,

Sits

Sits in his hallow'd fane ;---his votaries hears,  
 Accepts their offerings, and rewards their prayers.  
 While hell's dread ruler in his car convey'd  
 To realms of darkness the reluctant maid. 60

Long as she view'd the star-bespangled skies,  
 And ocean's many-teeming waters rise ;  
 While earth's gay verdure fled not from her view,  
 Nor Phœbus yet his cheerful light withdrew ;  
 So long the ray of hope illum'd her breast,  
 Nor sunk her soul, undaunted tho' distrest.  
 Her mother still she thought would meet her sight,  
 And friendly powers who dwelt in realms of light.--  
 E'en ocean's depth resounded to her cry,  
 And lofty mountains towering to the sky ! 70

At length, the shrieks of woe her mother hears--  
 Her heavenly breast the shaft of anguish tears.

The

The blooming wreath she from her brow unbinds ;  
 Rends her bright locks, and gives them to the winds :  
 Then (mournful emblem of her inward woes !)  
 A fable veil athwart her shoulders throws.  
 As some fond bird her ravish'd young deplores,  
 And every secret shade in vain explores ;  
 To seek the fair she flies o'er sea and land,  
 The burning torches waving in her hand. 80  
 Nor gods, nor men the author of her woes  
 Unfold---no birds of omen'd flight disclose.

Nine tedious days in vain the queen ador'd  
 The various regions of the earth explor'd ;  
 Nor did she taste, while she her course pursued,  
 The balmy nectar, or ambrosial food ;  
 Nor ever in the cool translucent wave,  
 Toil's sweet relief, her form of beauty lave.

On

On the tenth morn, as chacing night's dull gloom,  
 Aurora's beams the purpled east illume, 90  
 Pale Hecate before her view appear'd,  
 Her hand the faintly-gleaming taper rear'd,  
 And thus began; Oh thou! to whom we owe  
 Those joys, the season's circling flight bestow;  
 What god, what mortal dar'd the impious deed,  
 That makes a heavenly breast with sorrow bleed?  
 I heard thy daughter's voice implore relief;  
 Unknown to me the author of her grief—

\* \* \*

She ceas'd; nor did the goddess make reply,  
 But sudden wav'd the flaming torch on high, 100  
 And fought the ruler of the day; whose fight  
 From the pure regions of unclouded light

All actions views.—Before his car they came;  
 The burning car, and horses breathing flame,  
 Stop'd sudden.—Ceres thus; Oh Phoebus hear!  
 My fame, my ancient dignity revere!  
 If e'er my blessings gave thy soul delight,  
 Those blessings now by friendship's act requite.  
 A daughter late was mine of beauteous form—  
 (Sweet tender plant, uprooted by a storm!) 110  
 Distant I heard her loud-lamenting cries;  
 But fate severe denied her to my eyes.  
 Oh thou! who crown'd with ether's purest light,  
 Thro' earth and ocean dart'st thy boundless fight,  
 Tell me what god, what mortal has convey'd  
 Reluctant from these arms my darling maid?

Daughter of Rhea! he replied, I hear  
 With grief thy wrongs, and dignity revere.

Blame

Blame not th' ethereal race—from heaven's dread  
king,

Who dwells mid' 'black'ning clouds, thy sorrows  
spring. 120

Pluto, by his decree the virgin bore,

Where darkly-frowning on th' infernal shore,

His lofty palace stands—no more repine ;

No cause for anguish, nor for shame is thine.

He, brother to the god who rules on high,

Now hails her empress of the lower sky :

For Saturn's awful race superior reign

O'er heaven, o'er hell, and earth-encircling main.

He said ; and then (his course no more delay'd)

Spoke to his fiery steeds—his steeds obey'd. 130

Whirl'd rapid onwards thro' th' illumin'd skies,

The flame-rob'd chariot kindles as it flies :

Swift, as when rushing thro' the blaze of day,  
Darts the fierce eagle on his distant prey.

But deeper anguish rends the mother's soul,  
And thoughts of vengeance in her bosom roll;  
She shuns th' imperious power who rules on high,  
And quits th' immortal synod of the sky.  
Then, furious from Olympus' airy height  
To earth precipitates her rapid flight. 140  
There mingling with the race of man, she shares  
Their various toils—consum'd with grief appears  
Her beauteous form;—unknown from shore to shore  
She roves; till Celeus hospitable door  
Receives her steps—He in Eleusis reign'd,  
Where still her rites, and honors are maintain'd,

Beside a path, while o'er her drooping head  
His grateful shade the verdant olive spread;

As by her feet Parthenius' waters flow,  
 She sits, a pallid spectacle of woe. 150  
 Her faded cheeks no more with beauty bloom'd,  
 But now the form of wrinkled age assum'd.  
 She seem'd like those whom each attractive grace  
 Forsakes, when time with wrinkles marks the face;  
 From whom the Cyprian power indignant flies,  
 Her gifts refuses, and her charms denies;  
 Who, in some regal dome, by fate severe,  
 Are doom'd to nurse, and serve another's heir.

Four gentle nymphs light-moving o'er the plain  
 Approach; four brazen urns their arms sustain— 160  
 Great Celeus was their fire—he bade them bring  
 The limpid water from Parthenius spring.  
 Lovely they seem'd as heaven's immortal powers:  
 Youth's purple light, and beauty's opening flowers  
 Glow'd

Glow'd on their cheeks—Callidice the fair,  
 And meek Clauidice with pensive air;  
 Then Demo, and Callithoe's riper grace  
 Appear'd, the eldest of the lovely race.

They hail the power unknown—(For mortal eyes  
 How hard to penetrate a god's disguise!) 170  
 Who, and whence art thou, Dame! whose brow  
     appears  
 Mark'd by the traces of revolving years?  
 Why dost thou shun yon peopled town? in grief  
 Why lonely sit?—there thou wilt find relief:  
 There, matrons like thyself, who long the load  
 Of life have borne, and traced its rugged road,  
 Employ'd in labors, such as best engage  
 The pleas'd attention of declining age,  
 With tender maids thy sorrows shall condole,  
 And acts of friendship cheer thy drooping soul! 180

Hail

Hail nymphs unknown ! the goddess thus rejoin'd,  
 Accept the tribute of a grateful mind.  
 Would you the story of my sorrows know,  
 Attend to no fictitious tale of woe.

Reluctant from the Cretan coast I came ;  
 Dear native land ! and Doris is my name.  
 To ruffians force who plough the wat'ry way,  
 I fell an helpless, unresisting prey.  
 The bark bounds swiftly o'er the liquid main,  
 And soon the coast of Thericus we gain. 190  
 The vessel safely moor'd,—a female band  
 Prepare the banquet on the neighb'ring strand ;  
 Whilst wide around us eve's grey vapors rise,  
 And her dim shades roll slowly thro' the skies.  
 But, deeply-musing on my woes, I pine,  
 Nor share the feast, nor taste the chearful wine.

When

When thro' the sky night's deeper gloom was spread,  
 Unnotic'd, trembling o'er the beach I fled.  
 The spoilers lust of gold I rendered vain;  
 Unransom'd, thus escap'd the galling chain 200  
 Of servitude---long time from shore to shore  
 I wander'd---various toils and perils bore.  
 To me e'en now unknown, ere you unfold,  
 The land I tread, the people I behold.

To you, ye virgins! may th' ethereal powers,  
 Who o'er Olympus dwell in airy bowers,  
 Shed choicest favors! may your comforts prove  
 Of lovely form, deserving of your love!  
 And be your children with such beauty blest,  
 As hope can image in a parent's breast! 210  
 Then gentle maids, in pity to my woes,  
 How best I can obtain relief, disclose,

In

In yonder town---with pleasure I'll engage  
 In tasks best suited to my feeble age.  
 Well-skill'd in household toils, to please my lord  
 The couch I'll spread, and crown his festive board ;  
 Or should a child be trusted to my care,  
 These arms shall nurse him, and these knees shall bear.

She ceas'd ;---the loveliest of a lovely line,  
 Callidice replied ; no more repine ! 220  
 But know, whate'er th' immortal gods ordain,  
 It is our part to suffer, not complain—  
 Enough for us that justice rules their mind,  
 Whose wisdom, like their power, is unconfin'd.  
 The chiefs, who here supreme dominion hold,  
 Be it my task, O stranger ! to unfold :  
 Thro' whom, Eleusis hostile rage defies  
 Beneath whose care yon guardian ramparts rise ;

E

From

From whom protecting law derives its force,  
 And awful justice holds her steady course. 230  
 Triptolemus, of deep-revolving mind,  
 Diocles noble, Polyxenus kind ;  
 With every milder grace Eumolpus crown'd,  
 And stately Dolichus in arms renown'd.  
 Superior to the rest, o'er these domains,  
 Our honor'd sire, the mighty Celeus reigns---  
 Each chief a lovely consort boasts, who guides  
 Domestic labors, and at home presides :  
 Not one of them who would thy suit reject,  
 But sooth thy sorrows, and thy age respect : 240  
 For sure, thou seem'st of more than mortal race,  
 Tho' time with wrinkles marks thy pallid face.  
 But if thou here wilt rest, without delay  
 We'll to our mother's ears thy tale convey.  
 If she approves, accept a welcome there---  
 An only child, an unexpected heir,

Born

Born to his parents in declining age,  
 Our darling pleasure, will thy cares engage.  
 Shouldst thou preserve him (kindly thus employ'd)  
 Till ripening manhood make thy labors void, 250  
 Such gifts hereafter he'll on thee bestow,  
 As those will envy most, who best shall know.

The virgin ceas'd; nor aught the goddess said,  
 But bow'd submissive her assenting head.  
 The liquid chrystal fills their polish'd urns:  
 Each nymph exulting to the town returns.

Arriv'd at Celeus' dome, they quick disclose  
 The stranger's humble suit, and tale of woes  
 To \* Metanira—pleas'd at the request,  
 Maternal fondness glowing in her breast, 260  
 She bids them to the matron thus declare,  
 That ample treasures should reward her care.

E 2

Like

\* The wife of Celeus.

Like the kine's lowing race, that sportive bound  
 Along the plain with flowery verdure crown'd;  
 Or the sleek fawn, when he at first perceives  
 Spring's genial warmth, and crops the budding  
     leaves;

Thus joyful thro' the beaten road they pass,  
 With robes collected to promote their haste.  
 Their tresses, like the crocus' flamy hue,  
 In waving radiance round their shoulders flew. 270

Now to the place, where fate the heavenly dame  
 Beside the murmuring stream, the virgins came.  
 Their mother's suit they urge, nor she denies—  
 While thoughts of sorrow in her bosom rise,  
 Wrapt in the sable veil her course she bends;  
 The robe dark-flowing to her feet descends.

Soon they approach to Celeus' stately gate;  
 Within the lofty hall the † mother fate

Beside

† Metanira.

Beside the threshold—frequent to her breast  
 The child, the darling of her soul, she prest. 280  
 Each nymph to greet her much-lov'd parent flies,  
 While Ceres distant stands in humble guise.

Lo ! suddenly before their wond'ring sight  
 Her form increasing, to the temple's height  
 Ascends—her head with circling rays is crown'd,  
 And wide th' ethereal splendor spreads around !

Awe, veneration seiz'd the mother's breast,  
 And pallid fear was on her cheeks imprest—  
 Upstarting from her couch she'd fain resign  
 The seat resplendent to her guest divine : 290  
 With looks unwilling she the suit denies,  
 And fixes on the ground her radiant eyes.  
 But kind Iambe with a modest mien  
 A seat provided for the season's queen :

A lambkin's snowy fleece she o'er it spread ;—  
 Still deeply-musing nought the goddess said ;  
 But round her head the dusky mantle drew,  
 To hide her deep-felt anguish from their view.

Be it thy care to nurse this lovely boy,  
 Child of my age, an unexpected joy 300  
 By favoring gods bestow'd!—should thro' thy cares,  
 My Demophon arrive at manhood's years ;  
 Others shall at thy happier state repine,  
 Such high rewards, such treasure shall be thine !

Oh woman ! favor'd by the powers of heaven,  
 To whom the gods this beauteous child have given,  
 Ceres replied, I take with joy thy heir—  
 No nurse unskill'd receives him to her care :

Nor

Nor magic spell, nor roots of mighty power,  
 From earth's dark bosom torn at midnight hour, 310  
 Shall hurt thy offspring—to defeat each charm,  
 And herb malignant of its power disarm,  
 Full well I know.—She said, and to her breast  
 The infant clasp'd, and tenderly careft.

Thus Ceres nurs'd the child—exulting joy  
 Reign'd in his parents hearts—mean while the boy  
 Grew like an offspring of ethereal race;  
 Health crown'd his frame, and beauty deck'd his face.  
 No mortal food he ate :—the queen ador'd  
 Around him oft ambrosial odors pour'd; 320  
 Oft' as the child was on her bosom laid,  
 She heavenly influence to his soul convey'd.  
 At night, to purge from earthly dross his frame,  
 She kindled on the earth th' annealing flame;

And

And like a brand, unmark'd by human view,  
 Amid the fire wide-blazing frequent threw  
 Th' unconscious child—his parents wond'ring trace  
 Something divine, a more than mortal grace  
 Shine in his form;—and she design'd, the boy  
 To chance superior, and to time's annoy, 330  
 Crown'd with unceasing joys in heaven should reign--  
 Those thoughts a mother's rashness render'd vain!

One fatal night, neglectful of repose,  
 Her couch forsaking, Metanira rose;  
 And from her secret stand beheld the flame  
 Receive the infant.—Terror shakes her frame!  
 She shrieks in agony—she smites her thighs;  
 And thus she pours her loud-lamenting cries.—

Oh Demophon, my child! this stranger guest,  
 What causeless rage, what frenzy has possess'd? 340

Consuming

Consuming flames around thy body roll,  
And anguish rends thy mother's tortur'd soul!

Wrath seiz'd the goddess; her immortal hands  
Sudden she plung'd amid the fiery brands;  
And full before th' afflicted mother's view,  
On the cold floor the blameless infant threw,  
And furious thus began; Oh mortals vain!  
Whose folly counteracts what gods ordain!  
Who lost in error's maze, will never know  
Approaching blessings from impending woe! 350  
Long, for the rashness that thy soul posselt,  
Shall keen reflection agonize thy breast.  
For, by that oath which binds the powers supreme  
I swear! by fable Styx, infernal stream!  
Else had thy son in youth's perpetual prime  
Shar'd heavenly joys, and mock'd the rage of time.

F

But

But now 'tis past ! from fate he cannot fly !—  
 Man's common lot is his—he breaths to die !—  
 But since a goddess on her knees carest  
 Thy child--since oft he slumber'd on her breast, 360  
 Fame shall attend his steps, and bright renown  
 With wreaths unfading shall his temples crown.  
 In future times, torn by discordant rage,  
 Eleusis' sons commutual war shall wage ;  
 (Then Demophon)

Know then that Ceres, from whose bounty flow  
 Those blessings the revolving years bestow,  
 Who, both from gods and man's frail race demands  
 Her honors due, before thy presence stands.  
 Away, and let Eleusis' sons unite, 370  
 Where steep Callichorus' projecting height

Frowns

Frowns o'er the plain, a stately fane to rear :  
 Her awful rites its goddess shall declare.  
 There with pure hearts upon the hallow'd shrine  
 Your victims flay, and sooth a power divine !

This said ; the front of age so late assum'd  
 Dissolv'd—her face with charms celestial bloom'd.  
 The sacred vesture that around her flew,  
 Thro' the wide air ambrosial odors threw :  
 Her lovely form with sudden radiance glow'd ; 380  
 Her golden locks in wreaths of splendor flow'd.  
 Thro' the dark palace stream'd a flood of light,  
 As cloud-engender'd fires illumine the night  
 With dazzling blaze—then swiftly from their view,  
 Urg'd by indignant rage, the goddess flew.

In Metanira's breast amazement reign'd : —  
 Silent she stood ; nor long her knees sustain'd

Their tottering weight---the funk in grief profound.

The child neglected, shrieking on the ground

Beside her lay : his agonizing cries 390

The sisters hear, and from their couches rise :

They snatch him from the floor---the fire suppress

One lights anew---one fondly to her breast

The infant folds---by filial duty sway'd,

Another hastes to Metanira's aid.

And now they gather'd round th' afflicted child,

And bath'd his beauteous form with dust defil'd :

With broken sobs he ceas'd not to complain ;

A different nurse he fought, but fought in vain.

To sooth the goddess' rage, with awe impress, 400

In deep consult they pass the hours of rest ;

Till night her dreary shadows roll'd away,

And bright Aurora brought the cheerful day :

Then,

Then, as she bade, around whose brow divine,  
 The blooming flowers, a lovely wreath, entwine,  
 They, to the ruler of Eleusis' state,  
 The wonders of th' eventful night relate.

The sages of the land conven'd, his will  
 He thus unfolds; that on th' impending hill  
 Of steep Callicorus, to the bright-hair'd power 410  
 An altar rise, and stately temple tower.  
 Gladly the chiefs assent—with busy care  
 The people soon the splendid fabric rear.  
 A power superior aids their warm desire;—  
 They hail the omen, and with joy retire.

There Ceres, distant from the powers divine,  
 Sits deeply-musing in her hallow'd shrine.  
 The eager wish to view her daughter's face,  
 Again to fold her with a fond embrace,

Consumes

Consumes her beauteous form—alternate roll 420  
 The tides of grief and vengeance in her soul.  
 She to the earth her genial power denies :  
 The corn unfruitful in its bosom lies :  
 The oxen draw the crooked plough in vain ;  
 No waving verdure decks the blasted plain :  
 Pale famine spreads around—each mortal breast  
 Is sunk with woe, and by despair possess'd.  
 One common fate had now involv'd them all,  
 And the blest gods who in th' aerial hall  
 Of high Olympus reign, by mandor'd, 430  
 Their votaries' vows, and offerings had deplor'd :  
 But Jove revolving on the hills, design'd  
 By Ceres ;—to appease her wrathful mind,  
 Sends the bright goddess of the splendid bow,  
 Whose gold-bespangled wings with lustre glow—  
 Thro' yielding air with matchless speed she flew ;  
 Eleusis' temple rose before her view.

There

There, while rich incense wafted fragrance round,  
 Clad in her sable veil the queen she found,  
 And thus began : The ruler of the sky 440  
 Calls thee to meet th' assembled gods on high—  
 Oh haste ! with them celestial pleasures prove ;  
 Nor fruitless be the words that come from Jove !

Iris in vain her soothing words addrest ;  
 The goddess yields not to her kind request :  
 In vain, at his command who sways the skies,  
 Th' immortals sue—she hears and she denies :  
 Their proffer'd honors, and their gifts disdains,  
 And in her breast relentless vengeance reigns.  
 Firmly resolv'd where high Olympus towers, 450  
 She ne'er would mingle with th' ethereal powers,  
 Nor fruitful earth's productive force renew,  
 Till her lov'd daughter met her longing view.

When

When the dread power whose thunder shakes the  
 skies,  
 From whose keen sight no act unnotic'd lies,  
 Heard her determin'd will ; he gave command  
 To Maia's son, who bears the golden wand,  
 That straight to Erebus he wing his way,  
 And woo the god whom shadowy forms obey  
 With words persuasive ; that his queen ador'd 460  
 In Stygian realms, might be to heaven restor'd,  
 And mingling with the powers celestial, ease  
 Her mother's anxious soul, and wrath appease.

Hermes obeys, and from the realms of day  
 To Tartarus directs his rapid way ;  
 There, in the centre of the earth profound,  
 The monarch of th' infernal realms he found  
 High-thron'd in gloomy state—beside her lord  
 Fair Proserpine her mother's loss deplor'd,

Who

Who, deep-revolving in her troubled mind, 470  
 Dire vengeance 'gainst th' ethereal race design'd.

Hermes began ; Oh thou ! whose awful head  
 Is crown'd with sable locks—to whom the dead  
 Submissive reverence pay—the fire of gods  
 Great Jove decrees, that from these dark abodes,  
 By me, thy consort crown'd with beauty's charms,  
 Should be to heaven restor'd, and Ceres' arms.  
 For know, such vengeful thoughts her soul inspire,  
 That e'en the immortal gods must feel her ire.  
 No golden harvests now the plains adorn, 480  
 In earth she hides the life-sustaining corn,  
 And man must fall ;---to those who rule the skies  
 No honors shall be paid, no prayers arise.  
 Far, far from them, with rage-enkindled heart,  
 She, in the lofty temple sits apart,

G

Rear'd

Rear'd by Eleusis to her power divine,  
Where clouds of incense roll around her shrine.

The gloomy monarch Jove's commands obey'd ;  
Reluctant smiles his dark-bent brows display'd :  
And thus his blooming confort he address ; 490  
Go Proserpine ! let pleasure sway thy breast,  
No more let memory recall the past,  
But to thy mother's fond embraces haste—  
'Tis fruitless, nay 'tis folly to complain---  
Nor I a husband that deserves disdain---  
Brother to Jove supreme ! --- Hence then my fair !  
And soon again to Pluto's arms repair.  
Honor to thee, the heavenly powers shall pay ;  
Thee shall the shadowy forms of hell obey :  
And those, who ne'er on earth invok'd thy aid, 500  
Nor victims slew, nor rich oblations paid,

By

By thee condemn'd, shall prove eternal pains  
In the dark realms where endless horror reigns,

He said; and sudden from her seat arose  
His lovely bride---her heart with transport glows;  
Then Pluto fear'd, left from the realms above,  
And Ceres, object of her filial love,  
She'd ne'er return; and fraudulent decreed  
The fair should taste the rich pomegranate's seed—  
A fatal pledge! The ruler of the dead

510

Then to their view his fable courfers led;  
And yok'd them to the splendid car — his bride  
Assum'd the seat, with Hermes by her side,  
The god, whose fury to th' infernal plains  
Hurl'd hapless Argus;— firm he grasp'd the reins,  
And wav'd the lash — the steeds impetuous flew:  
The realms of darkness vanish'd from their view.

Onward they rush, impatient of delay,  
 Nor seas, nor rapid streams impede their way;  
 Nor towering heights, which dark'ning clouds  
     surround ; 520  
 Nor low-sunk vales with verdant herbage crown'd.  
 With steady ardor, unabated force,  
 Thro' depth of air they urge their rapid course ;  
 Till Ceres' sacred temple they behold,  
 Where clouds of incense round her altar roll'd.

Soon as the goddess view'd her daughter's face,  
 With eager speed she rush'd to her embrace.  
 Thus when the hind her long-lost fawn espies,  
 In transport from the mountain's brow she flies.

Thou,

Thou, here with Ceres, daughter of my love, 530  
 Shalt stay, high-honor'd by the powers above :  
 But if thou aught in Pluto's drear abode  
 Hast ate, thou must retrace the gloomy road ;  
 And with th' infernal god his sceptre share  
 One tedious third of the revolving year :  
 The rest, shalt thou partake with heavenly powers---  
 And when with herbage green, and blooming flowers  
 Spring decks the earth, thou shalt ascend the skies,  
 A joy to mortal and celestial eyes.

\* \* \* \*

Say, by what art thy unsuspecting mind 540  
 The God deceiv'd ? --- Thus Proserpine rejoin'd :  
 When the wing'd herald of the powers above  
 Came with the mandate of all-ruling Jove,

Again

Again to bear me to th' ethereal skies,  
 And give me to thy long-desiring eyes ;  
 That thus thy vengeful rage might be suppress'd :  
 My heart with transport bounded in my breast.  
 But then, so hell's imperious lord decreed ;  
 I ate reluctant the pernicious feed.

Joyful I wander'd thro' the verdant plain, 550  
 Leucippe, Phæno, Rhodia in my train :  
 With them Electra, Ianira stray'd,  
 And Rhodope in beauty's charms array'd :  
 Ocyroe too was there of roseate hue ;  
 Her golden locks around Chryseis flew :  
 Calypso's charming form, Urania's grace,  
 And Galaxaure's love-inspiring face :  
 Pallas, who bids the rage of battle glow,  
 And chaste Diana with her founding bow.

In

In pleasing sports the fleeting hours we wear, 560

And pluck the blushing honors of the year.

Lilies and Hyacinths the air perfume ;

The crocus glows, th' expanding roses bloom :

But lovelier far I view with joyful eyes

The fair Narcissus from the earth arise.

This wond'rous flower, the meadow's blooming pride,

I rush'd to seize---The rent earth opening wide

A dreary gulf disclos'd : from thence appear'd

The mighty king in Tartarus rever'd,

And bore me to his golden car---in vain 570

I weep, resist, and to the gods complain.

Swift flies his chariot to the realms below,

And still my bosom bleeds at former woe !

With mutual joy they now sweet converse hold,

And now each other in their arms enfold ;

And

And, all the live-long day, the transports prove  
 That flow from filial and maternal love.  
 No thoughts of vengeance Ceres' soul infest ;  
 But harmony and pleasure rule her breast.

Soon Hecate approach'd, and hail'd the fair, 580  
 A splendid fillet bound her flowing hair :  
 To Proserpine her breast with friendship glow'd,  
 And all her acts a kind attention show'd.

And now th' all-seeing god whose thunders shake  
 Th' aërial regions, thus to Rhea spake :  
 Around whose form her robes in darkness flew ;  
 From whom her birth the queen of seasons drew---  
 Let Ceres hasten to th' ethereal plain,  
 And every honor she desires, obtain.  
 Her Proserpine, with heavenly powers, shall share 570  
 In joy, two parts of the revolving year,

The

The rest in realms of night.--- The thunderer said :  
 The willing goddess his commands obey'd ;  
 And from Olympus', cloud-encircled height  
 Bends to Callicorus her lofty flight :  
 O'er the drear region desolation frown'd,  
 So late with fruits, and waving verdure crown'd.

But soon the earth its wonted power regains ;  
 Again the harvest cloaths th' extended plains ;  
 Increasing ploughshares turn the grateful soil, 600  
 And weighty sheaves reward the lab'ers toil.

Thro' air's ungenial void the goddess bends  
 Her flight sublime, and now on earth descends.  
 Each kindred power to hail the other flies,  
 Joy rules their hearts, and sparkles in their eyes.  
 At length sage Rhea, 'round whose awful head  
 The wreath of splendor glow'd, to Ceres said.

H

Jove

Jove calls my daughter to th' ethereal plain ;  
 Such honours as thy soul desires, obtain.  
 He wills, two parts of the revolving year,      610  
 Thy Proserpine shall heavenly pleasures share ;  
 The rest in realms of night.—His sacred nod  
 Confirm'd the promise of th' all-ruling god.  
 Hasten then---no more oppose with wrathful mind  
 Heaven's mighty lord mid' dark'ning clouds en-  
     shrin'd :

But thy kind influence to the earth impart,  
 And with thy blessings cheer man's drooping heart.

The power, whose brow the flowery wreath  
     entwines,  
 Obeys her word---her anger she resigns.  
 Th' extended plains with fruits and flowers are  
     crown'd,      620  
 And plenty reigns, and nature smiles around.  
     Then

Then to the chiefs, who o'er Eleusis sway'd,  
 Whose righteous laws the grateful realm obey'd,  
 Eunolpus, and Triptolemus the sage,  
 Diocles skill'd to tame the courser's rage,  
 Kind Polyxenus, and the king who reign'd  
 Supreme, great Celeus, she her rites explain'd;  
 Those sacred mysteries, for the vulgar ear  
 Unmeet; and known, most impious to declare!  
 Oh! let due reverence for the gods restrain  
 Discourses rash, and check enquiries vain!

Thrice happy he among the favour'd few,  
 To whom 'tis given those glorious rites to view!  
 A fate far different the rejected share;  
 Unblest, unworthy her protecting care,  
 They'll perish; and with chains of darkness bound,  
 Be plung'd for ever in the gulf profound!

Her laws establish'd, to the realms of light,  
 With Proserpine she wings her towering flight :  
 The sacred powers assume their seat on high, 640  
 Beside the god, whose thunders shake the sky.

Happy, thrice happy he of human race,  
 Who proves deserving their benignant grace !  
 Plutus, who from his unexhausted stores  
 To favor'd mortals boundless treasure pours,  
 Th' auspicious Deities to him shall fend ;  
 And prosperous fortune shall his steps attend.

And now, O Ceres ! at thy hallow'd shrine  
 Submissive bow the Eleusinian line :  
 Antron's dark rocks re-echo with thy praise, 650  
 And sea-surrounded Paros thee obeys.  
 Goddess ! thro' whom the season's circling flight  
 Successive blessings pours, and new delight ;

And

And thou, O lovely Proserpine reward  
With honor'd age, and tranquil joys the bard  
Who sings your acts ; and soon his voice he'll raise,  
And other strains shall celebrate your praise.

N O T E S.

All this lovely morning  
With birds and bees and flowers  
We have your day, and now we have  
And when the sun is low

1470

# N O T E S.

---

PAGE 21. LINE 32.

“**A**ND Ocean’s briny swell with SMILES is  
crown’d.”

The same figure is used by the Psalmist somewhat heightened.—“The vallies shall stand so thick with corn that they shall LAUGH and SING.”

PSAL. lxxv. V. 14.

PAGE

## PAGE 22. LINE 49.

“Not to the white-arm'd nymphs with beauty  
crown'd,  
Her lov'd companions reach'd the mournful  
found.”

The original is, ὃδ' ἀγλαοκαρποὶ εἰλαιαι; “neither did the beautiful-fruited olives hear her.” This passage Ruhnkenius gives up as unintelligible. Probably <sup>x</sup> *εταῖραι* should be read instead of *εἰλαιαι*, and in that case it would signify; “Neither did her beautiful-wristed (white-arm'd) companions hear her voice.” *Αγλαοκαρπος* is used by Pindar in that sense, and applied to Thetis in his third Nemæan Ode.

\* \* \*

x Agreeing to *Comites*, made  
use of by Ovid in his tract  
of the Love of Proserpine.

PAGE

For this elegant Emendation  
Mr. Hole was indebted to Mr.  
Cannan Moore.

PAGE 22. LINE 56.

“ But he, at distance from their airy bowers,  
Sits in his hallow'd fane.” —

This idea is very consistent with the imperfect system of heathen Polytheism in the early ages of Greece, when it was supposed Jupiter himself could know nothing of any transaction, unless locally present.— Thus Thetis advises Achilles to leave the army, and retire to his ships; and promises that, when Jupiter returned from a feast in Ethiopia, she would request him to favor their cause.— This passage is thus elegantly translated by Mr. Pope —

“ The fire of gods, and all th' ethereal train,  
On the warm limits of the farthest main,  
Now mix with mortals, nor disdain to grace  
The feast of Ethiopia's blameless race.

31

Twelve

Twelve days, the powers indulge the genial rite ;  
 Returning with the twelfth revolving light.  
 Then will I mount, &c."

Il. Lib. 1. l. 554.

\* \* \*

PAGE 24. LINE 76.

" A fable veil athwart her shoulders throws."

Ceres is said to have worn a black veil by the Grecian poets, either as a sign of sorrow for the loss of Proserpine, or to conceal her grief from observation. But it was used as an ornamental part of dress, richly embroider'd and transparent, in very early ages. Homer describes a beautiful one offered by the Trojan matrons at the altar of Minerva : (Il. Lib. 6. l. 293.) And Penelope's is thus described by Pope in his translation of the eighteenth book of his Odyffey.

" A

“ A veil translucent o’er her brow display’d,  
Her beauty seems, and only seems to shade.”

We find Rebecca makes use of one, on being informed that Isaac was approaching to meet her. (Gen. c. 24. v. 65.) When Judah meets Tamar likewise, she is described, as COVERING HERSELF WITH A VEIL, (Gen. c. 38. v. 14.) This phrase is rather remarkable, as Judah, on that account possibly, supposed her to be a courtesan ; and it is said, that slaves formerly in Greece wore larger veils than other people. Euripides makes Andromache complain in his play of that name—  
“ I was conducted from my husband’s bed to the strand, my face COVERED with the VEIL OF A CAPTIVE.” It is well-known that the veil of female slaves in the Levant, at present, covers the whole body, and that the Greeks have been more tenacious of their old customs, than most other

nations.—May not this account for the daughters of Celeus, though struck with the venerable appearance of Ceres, proposing an employment to her, on seeing her wear a veil appropriated to women of inferior rank, which otherwise would have scarcely been consistent with their amiable characters? (See p. 3c. and p. 36. l. 275.)

\* \* \*

PAGE 25. LINE 98.

“ Unknown to me the author of her grief.”

Some part of Hecate's speech appears to have been lost—She relates nothing more to Ceres, than what she knew before ; and yet, from what follows, one would suppose that her information  
had

had convey'd to the goddess some additional cause for grief and vexation.

\* \* \*

PAGE 29. LINE 159.

“ Four gentle nymphs light-moving o'er the plain Approach.”—

This circumstance is mentioned by Pausanias, and bears some resemblance to that beautiful passage in Genesis, which gives so pleasing an idea of the simplicity and artless benevolence of the primitive times :—when Rebecca went with her pitcher to the well, and found there the servant of Abraham—“ He ran to meet her and said;  
“ Let me I pray thee drink a little water of thy  
“ pitcher—And she said ; Drink, my lord : and  
“ she hastened and let down her pitcher upon her  
“ hand,

“ hand, and gave him drink : and when she had  
 “ done giving him drink, she said ; I will draw  
 “ water for thy camels also, until they have done  
 “ drinking.—And she hasted, and emptied her  
 “ pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto  
 “ the well to draw water, and drew for all his  
 “ camels.” Gen. c. 24. v. 17.—Can modern  
 politeness exceed the humanity of the action, or  
 refinement in language improve the description  
 of it !

\* \* \*

PAGE 31. LINE 184.

“ Attend to no fictitious tale of woe.  
 Reluctant from the Cretan coast I came.”--

This affirmation of truth by way of *Proem* to  
 a fabulous relation seems to reflect no great credit

on

on the integrity of Ceres, or judgment of the bard. It is however no uncommon mode of beginning a narrative story among the Grecian Poets, and Proserpine uses nearly the same expression when she acquaints Ceres with the manner in which she was carried off by Pluto. Ulysses, in giving a false account of himself to Minerva, begins with assuring her that he would speak merely what was true, and then says he was of Cretan extraction. (Od. B. 14. l. 192.) What is rather remarkable, in giving two other feigned accounts of himself, he declares that he was born in Crete. (Od. B. 13. l. 256. and B. 19. l. 181.) From these concurrent circumstances, may not § CRETAN FALSHOOD have been a proverbial expression long before the days of Epimenides, and glanced at both in the *Odyssey* and in this Poem?

It

§ Κρητες αλλ Ψευδοται.

It is somewhat strange that people of suspected characters in regard to truth, generally preface their speeches with some compliment to their own veracity, or with expressing a detestation of falshood ; and, if they mean to deceive, begin with protesting that they had no such design ; though true policy would suggest to them the expediency of avoiding the slightest insinuation which might lead even to a suspicion of deceit— But the language of falshood has been similar in all ages, and the Roman poet with great judgment, makes Sinon, after having mentioned the only true circumstance of his story, proceed in this manner—

—“ *nec si miserum fortuna Sinonem  
Finxit, vanum etiam mendacemq: improba finget.*”

*Æn. L. 2.*

“ Wretch as he is, yet Sinon can defy  
The frowns of fortune, and abhors a lie.”--PITT.

Virgil

Virgil is perhaps more conspicuous for his intimate acquaintance with the minute recesses of the human heart, than for the extent of his knowledge, or the sublimity of his genius.

\* \* \*

PAGE 38. LINE 297.

—" the dusky mantle drew  
To hide her deep-felt anguish from their view."

Here probably should follow the lines which the Scholiast on Nicander alludes to,—(See Preface, page 10.) and likewise some explanation of the miraculous appearance assumed by Ceres, which induced them not to look on her as a goddess, but to consider it as a sign of her being favor'd by some Deity, or an omen of divine approbation in regard to her taking charge of De-

K

mophon

mophon.—Something of this kind seems to be wanting, for by the few lines of Metanira's speech that are preserved, and immediately follow, we find her impressed with no veneration for Ceres, but speaking to her with the greatest freedom.

\* \* \*

PAGE 40. LINE 337.

“ She shrieks in agony—she smites her thighs.”

This was a common method among the ancients of expressing grief, or any violent emotion of the mind,—Plutarch in his life of Fabius, says ;  
 “ That HE STRUCK HIS THIGH on seeing his troops flying from their enemies”—probably through shame and vexation. Aſius expreſſes rage and indignation in the ſame manner.—Il. Lib. 12. l. 162. And Achilles his ſurprize and  
 anger.

anger.—Il. Lib. 15. l. 125.---In the holy Scripture it is represented as a sign of sorrow and unfeigned repentance. Thus Jeremy says; c. 31. v. 19. "Surely after that I was turned; I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh." And Ezekiel much to the same purport says--c. 21. v. 12. "Cry and howl, son of man! for it shall be upon my people: it shall be upon all the princes of Israel---terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people; smite therefore upon thy thigh!"---i. e. in token of grief and contrition.

\*

\*

\*

PAGE 52. LINE 528.

"In transport from the mountain's brow she flies."

It is evident from the few and imperfect words preserved in the original Greek manuscript, that

K 2

an

an affectionate dialogue between Ceres and Proserpine took place, after this line.—There is great reason to regret the frequent defects of the Moscow M. S. in this part of the poem.

\* \* \*

PAGE 53. LINE 535.

“One tedious third of the revolving year.”

See an observation on this passage at the end of the Preface.—Some few lines of the original seem to have been lost, where the vacancy is left in the page, from the abruptness of Ceres' question to Proserpine.

\* \* \*

PAGE 54. LINE 548.

“I ate reluctant the pernicious feed.”

Here

Here appears to be an omission, unless the speech of Proserpine has been transposed through some mistake. It should probably have begun with the following line—

“ Joyful I wander’d through the Nyfian plain.”  
And after THAT which now concludes the speech, should follow the account of Mercury’s coming to her in the palace of Pluto, with which it now begins.—As it stands at present, Proserpine concludes her narrative with telling Ceres, that she is still sorrowful, and the lines that immediately follow, describe their mutual joy at meeting each other.

\* \* \*

PAGE 56. LINE 580.

“ Soon Hecate approach’d.”

This passage is rather obscure in the original—  
she seems indeed both here and in two other places  
to

to have been introduced very needlessly, unless something allegorical was intended. The interview between Rhea and Ceres, which almost immediately follows, appears plainly to be so.

\* \* \*

PAGE 59. LINE 628.

“Those sacred mysteries for the vulgar ear  
Unmeet; and known most impious to declare.”

Diodorus observes of the religious rites prescribed by Orpheus, meaning the Eleusinian mysteries, that it was unlawful for those not initiated to enquire into their meaning; and there was a law at Athens, which condemned those to death who divulged any thing concerning them.

PAGE

PAGE 60. LINE 638.

“ Her laws established.”

Herodotus, in the 2d book of his history, relates that the mystic rites of Isis were originally carried from Egypt to Greece by the daughters of Danaus ; and that the Pelasgic women were instructed by them in the nature, design and forms of their celebration. From the same authority, strengthened by that of Apollodorus, it hath been supposed that these mysteries, disguised under other names and other forms, were afterwards celebrated at ELEUSIS in honour of CERES ; and obtained the name of THESMOPHORIA.

The Eleusinian mysteries were, however, divided into two distinct classes. The Thesmophoria were in the subordinate class.

A striking similitude hath been frequently observed, by the curious enquirers into antient customs,

customs, between the mysteries of Isis and CERES : and the supposition, that the latter were borrowed from the former, is supported by the strongest analogy, as well as by the most respectable authority.

Many of the learned indeed have conjectured that Greece was indebted to ORPHEUS for their introduction into that country : and that this antient bard had an eye to the Egyptian mysteries in their institution; and accommodated the general plan of the one, to the particular genius and design of the other. Some have even conjectured that the hymns which have been transmitted to the present times, under the name of Orpheus, were the same that were originally sung at the celebration of the rites of Ceres.—This honor, Pausanias remarks, had never been conferred on the hymns of Homer ; who, probably, by indulging

ing his fancy in fictions of its own creation, and departing with too bold a licence from the established traditions of the gods, had rendered his hymns unfit for their worship. It was for this unwarrantable stretch of poetic liberty that his works were proscribed by Plato.

The Egyptian priests threw an awful and ambiguous veil over their religious rites, and, having enjoined SILENCE and SECRESY, as indispensable terms of initiation, gave an air of pomp and solemnity to institutions that were trifling, and doctrines that were absurd. The simplest truths were lost in the croud of mystic rites which gathered thick upon them; and, while historical facts were veiled beneath the dress of allegory, it was difficult to distinguish the real from the fictitious; or to tell, with certainty, where the

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ANNALIST ended his record, and where the MYTHOLOGIST took up his fable.

The Grecians changed the names, but retained and exaggerated the stories of Egypt; they sometimes debased, at other times they improved and embellished them. That which amused the fancy, at length was admitted as the truth: and what at first was meant to be FIGURATIVE, was, in process of time, believed to be LITERAL.

If this hymn should not be supposed to allude to the Egyptian Isis, figured under the character of Ceres, and to Proserpine, as an emblem of the \*CORN BEING HID part of the year beneath the earth; may not the story on which it is founded be simply this?—The conjecture is vague, but it is hoped excusable, as many instances occur of the Greek poets blending history with allegory.

Pluto,

\* So Persephone signifies in the Phœnician language, from whence Proserpine is supposed to have been derived.

Pluto, probably king of the Molossians, wages war against the Eleusinians, wastes their country, and carries off their corn—a famine ensues—Jupiter, his brother, ruler over great part of Greece, who had connived at the invasion, thinks proper at length to obtain a peace for them, on their paying to Pluto one third of their tillage by way of tribute. They again cultivate their country, and Rhea, Ceres and Jupiter are reconciled; i. e. the earth produces corn, and the people are under the protection of their neighbouring king.

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PAGE 60. LINE 644.

“<sup>11</sup>Pluto, who from his unexhausted stores.”

The conclusion of the story seems evidently allegorical, and intended to convey this plain and excellent

excellent moral. "That those people shall grow rich who apply diligently to agriculture, and the cultivation of their lands." Plutus probably was called the son of Ceres on that account.



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